Queen Mary
University of London



Minutes of the SEMS Industrial Advisory Board Meeting of 11/03/2026

Queen Mary University of London

Meeting details and attendance

Date: 11/03/2026
Time: 11:00 – 13.00
Location: GC601 Graduate Centre
Link to recording: [Recording not available]

Chair: Guy Newcombe (Archipelago)

In-person attendees:
[in person sign-in sheet was lost, so this list may be incomplete]

Guy Newcombe	Archipelago
Joeseph Halett	Birla Carbon
Richard Tuley	European Thermodynamics Ltd.
Keizo Akutagama	Aston Martin F1
Paul Turner	D J Goode
Kiran Patel	Morgan Advanced Materials
Mark Lynch	Innovate UK
Karin Hing	QMUL
James Busfield	QMUL
Oliver Fenwick	QMUL
Kshitij Sabnis	QMUL
Chris Chapman	QMUL
Student Voice Committee members (x3)	QMUL
Karen Shoop	QMUL
Sara Hajikazemi	QMUL
Jae-Hwan Park	QMUL

Online Attendees:

Martin Thomas	AWE
Markys Cain	Electrosciences
Amy Anderson	Johnson & Johnson
Douglas Wason	Weir
Nigel Smith	PBC Biomed
Jae-Hwan Park	QMUL
Richard Cannon	NATS
Sharon Knight	BSI Group
Richard Smith	Winchester Consulting

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Minutes of meeting

1. Introduction (GN)

The meeting was chaired by GN, who introduced himself and welcomed those in attendance. GN then invited introductions from all industry members present at the meeting, both in person and online.

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and accepted without changes as a true and accurate record.

2. Programme changes to the MSc Engineering Management to accommodate January intake (JHP)

JHP explained the rationale for proposed changes to MSc Engineering Management programme to accommodate a January intake in addition to the existing September intake. This would involve a two-stage integrated project module (15-credit Capstone Research Design module followed by 60-credit Engineering Management Capstone) in place of the existing year-long 90-credit MSc Research Project module that current runs alongside other programmes. In Capstone Research Design, students define a feasible industry problem and methodology, which is assessed through two coursework elements (60%, 40%). The Engineering Management Capstone involves the execution of the proposed independent investigation and is assessed through a dissertation (75%) alongside two additional coursework elements (15%, 15%). A 15-credit elective module would also be undertaken, with a choice between: Renewable Energy Systems; Machine Learning & AI; Electrochemical Energy Storage; Advanced Water Treatment.

PT asked whether student do any industrial work experience as part of their MSc projects. OF clarified that there is no work experience requirement for these projects.

GN asked for clarity on how “capstone” is defined. JHP provided an interpretation that this term captures the industry-focused educational experience provided by this proposed structure. JB provided the context that “capstone” is an American term that is gradually being adopted more widely in the UK.

GA asked how technical the projects are intended to be and whether industry partners shape the projects. SH clarified that the intention is to work with industry to define the projects, such that they apply the concepts covered in the technical modules. She also clarified that the focus of these projects is on management rather than technical engineering.

3. Employability & Skills Framework (Olly Fenwick)

Key points from presentation:

OF provided a brief reminder of previous meeting, where the Employability and Skills Framework (ESF) rationale and initial ideas were presented. IAB members identified the main activities that they felt should be prioritised. The highlighted activities were as follows:

- Year 1 Sem A: Academic integrity; Create LinkedIn profile; Attend industry event
- Year 1 Sem B: Identify skills; Attend industry events; Writing emails
- Year 2 Sem A: Attend industry event; Attend placements event; Update CV using CareerSet; Critical thinking and problem solving
- Year 2 Sem B: Reflect on experiences

- Year 3 Sem A: Identify skills; Answering interview questions; Reflect on experiences; Using STAR framework in interviews
- Year 3 Sem B: Values and strengths analysis; Presenting data effectively; Creating a personal brand

Attendees at the November 2025 meeting also provided additional ideas on training activities, including workshops for CVs and cover letters, guest lectures with Q&A, 10-year progression plans, and awareness of the UK industry landscape. Students felt there was too much online learning and repetition of reflection, whilst other IAB members felt that there was a need to give students sufficient opportunity to apply skills, build business employability requirements into project activities, and promote placements. There was also a need identified to build an equivalent framework for MSc students.

b) Presentation of proposed ESF activities

KS presented a more detailed update on proposed ESF activities. During the 2025/26 academic year:

- targeted structure of advisor sessions had been used to introduce some ESF activities;
- the dedicated Year 3 skills module had been withdrawn and activities incorporated into project “anchor” modules;
- the dedicated Year 1 and Year 2 skills modules had been revamped to incorporate planned new activities;
- the skills mapping to QMUL Graduate Attributes was made explicit for each module.

During the 2026/27 academic year, a number of additional changes have been planned:

- surfacing of each module to core skills, common entry-level jobs, typical job functions and occupational areas would be made explicit;
- an “e-portfolio” tool would be introduced to enable students to record activities and reflections;
- the dedicated Year 1 and Year 2 skills modules would be withdrawn, such that all ESF activities would be delivered within “anchor modules” of the curriculum.

KS presented what these anchor modules would be within each year and programme:

- Year 1: Engineering Design (Sem A) and Exploring Engineering (Sem B) modules across all programmes;
- Year 2: Several different modules to enable coverage across all programmes;
- Year 3: Design project/studio design project modules.

For each year, KS presented a roadmap with a draft of proposed activities to be delivered within each year across identification of skills/attributes, building professional network/experience, preparation for the future, and reflection. As well as a number of activities required to satisfy accreditation requirements, the activities are delivered via a combination of e-learning, advisor meetings, live in-person sessions, online resources, and SkEmP week sessions.

The proposed framework includes:

- Advisor-led reflection and career planning discussions.
- LinkedIn Learning activities.
- Careers Service workshops.

- Industry engagement activities, including site visits and showcases.
- LinkedIn profile development.
- Job simulations.
- CV review tools.
- Reflective activities and employability assessments.

Breakout activity: Do the proposed activities effectively prepare our students for industry employment? In what ways can industry contribute to delivery?

A breakout session took place where attendees listed ESF activities which effectively prepare students for industry employment, aspects which were missing or insufficient, as well as ways in which industry could contribute towards the framework. The results of these discussions are recorded separately.

4. Student voice (Student Voice Committee Members)

Each member of the Student Voice Committee (SVC) introduced themselves, including their year and programme.

SVC1 reflected a concern amongst Biomedical Engineering students that Python programming is not taught enough. OF sought clarification, given that Python is used in coursework assignments, whether the concern is that Python teaching is insufficient to complete courseworks or whether it is more generally insufficient to prepare for employment. SVC1 clarified that the concern is that the Python introduced so far on the Jupyter Hub platform did not explain why the code was written in the way it does. SV clarified that, within the Biomedical Engineering programme, Python programming is taught more comprehensively in subsequent years, so the initial delivery simply aims to provide an introduction to Python. GA asked whether the issue centred around the platform, language or fundamental coding concepts, and SVC1 confirmed that the concerns mainly focused on the concepts. NC asked whether students want to learn Python coding simply for coursework or because it was useful more broadly. SVC1 confirmed that the general perspective is that Python coding ability adds value to future profession and is often a stated requirement on internship applications. GA proposed that the approach to a problem and being able to set up a solution is more important than the language, where capabilities on specific tools should not be a barrier for job applications.

SVC2 stated that students are enjoying the Exploring Engineering module, because it provides a perspective that is specific to their programme. However, they noted that the students were allocated to the same groups for each case study, so would prefer to mix it up.

SVC3 stated that they have enjoyed organised interactions with students currently on placement.

SVC4 proposed that more industry insight would be beneficial, such as by finding opportunities to tackle problems that reflect what engineers in industry typically do.

SVC5 suggested that it would be useful to facilitate greater integration with academic societies, which would allow students to get to know colleagues from other years. They also requested more activities during SkEmP week, including design challenges, hackathons, and other in-person opportunities.

SVC6 reiterated the benefits of mechanisms to facilitate communication between year groups. They highlighted the success of the Robotics café at teaching topics outside of curriculum, with particularly effective communication between academics and students.

5. Employability and Skills Activities for masters students (KS)

KS provided an introduction to the challenges of delivering Employability and Skills activities to MSc cohorts within SEMS. There is only one year to deliver the skills to make students "employer-ready" and an even shorter timeframe before students are typically applying for jobs. Most (but not all) MSc students have done their first degree abroad and are not familiar with the landscape of industry and employment in the UK.

Activity: What are the differences in qualities and skills for graduates who did their first degree outside the UK? What skills should we prioritise during our MSc programmes to bridge any gaps?

A breakout session took place where attendees listed strengths and skills gaps of "international first-degree" students and put a list of possible skills activities into priority order. The results of these discussions are recorded separately.

6. Any other business

OF announced that the next IAB meeting would take place in November 2026, with further details to follow. He encouraged all IAB members to attend the next meeting.

7. GN closed the meeting

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